



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

October 21, 1997

S. 900

Child Exploitation Sentencing Enhancement Act of 1997

As reported by the Senate Committee on the Judiciary on October 9, 1997

CBO estimates that enacting S. 900 would not have a significant impact on discretionary spending. The bill could lead to increases in both direct spending and receipts, but the amounts involved would be less than \$500,000 a year. Because S. 900 could affect direct spending and receipts, pay-as-you-go procedures would apply. This legislation contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 and would have no impact on the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

S. 900 would provide for increased penalties, including longer prison terms and greater criminal fines, for certain offenses relating to child abuse and exploitation. In addition, the bill would authorize the appropriation of such sums as may be necessary for each of fiscal years 1998 through 2001 to provide for guardians of victims of child abuse.

According to the United States Sentencing Commission, only about 150 cases per year could be affected by the bill's provisions. While the number and length of enhanced prison sentences under S. 900 are uncertain, any costs from longer sentences are likely to be small for at least the next five years. Such costs would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds. In addition, based on information from the Administrative Office of the United States Courts, we estimate that the costs of providing guardians in child abuse cases probably would be less than \$100,000 each year.

Enacting S. 900 could increase governmental receipts through greater collections of criminal fines. However, CBO estimates that any such increase would be less than \$500,000 annually. Criminal fines are deposited in the Crime Victims Fund and spent the following year. Thus, the change in direct spending from the fund would match any increase in revenues attributable to S. 900 with a one-year lag.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Mark Grabowicz. This estimate was approved by Robert A. Sunshine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.